

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 309479

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EEWT, EFIN, UR, US

SUBJECT: PROPOSED AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN MOSCOW

REF: MOSCOW 17664

1. EMBASSY'S REPORT OF MOORE'S PRESENTATION TO GVISHIANI
IS THE ONLY INDICATION DEPARTMENT OR USDOC HAVE HAD OF
INTEREST IN THE CREATION OF AN AMCHAM IN MOSCOW. IT IS
LIKELY THAT THE PROPOSAL WAS MOTIVATED BY MOORE'S OWN
INTEREST AND MAY NOT HAVE WIDE SUPPORT FROM THE U.S.
BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

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2. ELABORATION OF EMBASSY'S COMMENT (PARA 8 REFTEL) ON LOCAL
U.S. FIRMS' DISSATISFACTION WITH U.S.-U.S.S.R. TRADE AND
ECONOMIC COUNCIL WOULD BE HELPFUL IN THIS REGARD, FOR
EXAMPLE:

- WHAT IS THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THIS DISSATISFACTION? DOES THE U.S. BUSINESS COMMUNITY GENERALLY FEEL THAT THE EXISTING CHANNELS (THE COUNCIL, THE EMBASSY'S COMMERCIAL OFFICE) HAVE FAILED TO REPRESENT THE COMMUNITY'S VIEWS ADEQUATELY? IF SO, HOW CAN THEY BE BETTER REPRESENTED?

- IS THERE SENTIMENT FOR ANOTHER CHANNEL OR SIMPLY A DESIRE

FOR INCREASED EFFORTS THROUGH EXISTING CHANNELS? IF ANOTHER CHANNEL IS DESIRED, WHY DO THEY BELIEVE IT WOULD BE MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN THE COUNCIL, WHICH HAS HAD GOOD ACCESS TO SOVIET POLICY-MAKERS?

3. IN ORDER TO PROCEED FURTHER MOORE WOULD HAVE TO DEAL NOT WITH THE STATE COMMITTEE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, BUT WITH THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE AND THE U.S.S.R. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY. SINCE THESE VERY ORGANIZATIONS WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN THE CREATION OF THE TRADE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL AND, THROUGH THEIR CONTINUOUS PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT, HAVE A MAJOR STAKE IN ITS SUCCESS, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THEY WOULD BE ABOUT TO ALLOW THE CREATION OF ANOTHER, POSSIBLY COMPETITIVE, CHANNEL.

4. WHILE WE DO NOT KNOW PRECISELY WHAT KIND OF ORGANIZATION MOORE HAS IN MIND, AS THE TERM IS USED BY THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE U.S., AN AMCHAM IS AN ORGANIZATION OPEN TO BUSINESSMEN OF ALL NATIONALITIES WHOSE OBJECTIVE IS TO PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCE BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE HOST COUNTRY. ALTHOUGH THEY TYPICALLY OFFER MANY OF

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THE SAME SERVICES ALREADY PROVIDED IN MOSCOW BY USTEC (OFFICE FACILITIES, REFERENCE LIBRARIES, ASSISTANCE TO VISITORS, ETC.), THEIR PRIMARY FUNCTION IS TO ORGANIZE FREQUENT MEETINGS OF THE U.S. BUSINESS COMMUNITY, THEIR LOCAL COUNTERPARTS, AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. THESE MEETINGS USUALLY INCLUDE SOME FORMAL PRESENTATION BY PROMINENT FIGURES OF EITHER THE U.S. OR THE HOST COUNTRY, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY THEY PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO INFORMALLY EXCHANGE IDEAS AND INFORMATION ON TOPICS OF MUTUAL CONCERN. AMCHAMS OF THIS TYPE COEXIST WITH JOINT BUSINESS COUNCILS IN AT LEAST THREE COUNTRIES (BRAZIL, IRAN, AND JAPAN), AND, IN FACT, ENJOY SUBSTANTIAL OVERLAP OF MEMBERSHIP.

5. WHILE THE USG HAS NO BROAD POLICY ON THE FORMATION OF AMCHAMS, IN THE CASE OF THE SOVIET UNION THE DEPARTMENT AND USDOC HAVE NO DESIRE TO UNDERMINE THE TRADE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL BY PROMOTING WHAT MAY BE SEEN AS A COM-

PETITOR--PARTICULARLY SINCE THE USG PLAYED AN ACTIVE
ROLE IN ITS FORMATION. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF THE LOCAL
US BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND ITS HEAD OFFICES IN THE UNITED
STATES WANT TO FORM AN AMCHAM, WE WOULD NOT WANT TO
OBSTRUCT THEM. THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION IS TO QUIETLY
MONITOR THE SITUATION AND BETTER ASSESS THE TRUE FEELINGS
OF THE U.S. BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES--BOTH WITH RESPECT TO
AN AMCHAM AND WITH RESPECT TO THE COUNCIL.
ROBINSON

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